

## **Message Guide**

### **Living in the Will of God**

This Message Guide may be a little different from those that you have used before.

The purpose of these Notes is not an in-depth study of the scriptures used, but rather to assist you or your Study Group as you reflect on these messages given by Charles Price.

We present questions in order to stimulate discussion. Sometimes we will give you the answer ... sometimes not. At other times a statement or a theme is presented for your consideration.

As you allow the Holy Spirit to guide the direction of your study and discussions we pray the flexibility of this Message Guide will help you as you delve more deeply into Charles' message, and that you will unearth more lessons from the Lord than may not have been immediately obvious.

## Message Guide

### Living in the Will of God Part 1 – Seeing the Big Picture Psalm 139:1 - 17

1. Read and consider Psalm 139:1 – 17  
What were the 2 questions Charles presented at the beginning of this message?

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2. For many people life seems to be

- a. F \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_
- b. U \_\_\_\_\_
- c. L \_\_\_\_\_ of the D \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is it that has over 100 magazines devoted to it; 55% of Americans believing in it; and a disturbing 10% of 'evangelical Christians' who also believe in it?

Read the strong words that God has to say about this in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 17:2 – 5.

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4. List some of the things for which there is a longing deep inside us.

- a. To be K \_\_\_\_\_
- b. To be G \_\_\_\_\_
- c. That our lives have a G \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_
- d. To know that our lives are more than like a R \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ of P \_\_\_\_\_

5. So, what is the BIG QUESTION?

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6. Charles states that while this is a good and valid question, it is, in fact, the wrong question to ask first. What is the first question we should be asking?

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7. It is very important that we understand two things:
- a. We are O \_\_\_\_\_ of H \_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. We are S \_\_\_\_\_ of His L \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why is the Lordship of Christ basic to the Gospel?  
Read and consider Romans 14:9
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### Final Thoughts

We need to remember that **our** purpose must be an expression of **His** purpose.  
Our goals must be an expression of His goals.  
We will find that our individual meaning, role and purpose  
is within the bigger purposes of God.

God has a plan for your life that is part of a 'bigger picture'.  
That is why sometimes things happen that we don't like or anticipate.  
We need to accept our part in God's BIG picture.

We cannot live our lives on our own terms.  
Many people today want all the benefits of Christianity  
but do not want to be submitted to His Lordship.  
It was the same in the days of Jesus  
and many turned away from Him because of this.  
Read John 6:66

The two main essentials for growing in the Christian Life is to understand that:

We are objects of His love - therefore we trust Him  
We are subjects of His Lordship - therefore we obey Him.

## **Message Guide & Questions**

### **Living in the Will of God Part 2 – His Ways Are Not Our Ways Isaiah 55:6 - 9**

1. Read and consider Isaiah 55:6 – 9  
Can you recall from our last study what the first question we should be asking was?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is verse 8 presented as a C \_\_\_\_\_ or a C \_\_\_\_\_ ?
3. Read and consider Proverbs 3:5 - 6
4. What then is the 'contrast'? Read verse 9
5. How much higher? Please refer again to Isaiah 55:9  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why are God's ways and thoughts immeasurably higher than our ways and thoughts? Read and consider 1 Corinthians 1:25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. So, what is at the heart of living in the will of God?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Read and consider 2 Corinthians 5:7
9. There are two dangers we need to be aware of, and therefore avoid. What is the first danger? Read Psalm 119:133 and then verse 105  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. The Will of God must involve 3 things:
  - i. T \_\_\_\_\_ the W \_\_\_\_ of God, which are H \_\_\_\_\_ than ours.

- ii S \_\_\_\_\_ the W \_\_\_\_\_ of God, which is G \_\_\_\_\_ than ours.
- iii R \_\_\_\_\_ on the W \_\_\_\_\_ of God, which is T \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the second danger?

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### **Final Thoughts**

The thoughts and ways of God are not necessarily 'better' than ours;  
it is just that they are altogether different.  
If we cannot fully accept this we will have problems in our Christian life.  
We often try to measure by our own reference points  
and inevitably become disappointed.

In *walking by faith* it is usually only in retrospect  
that we see what has been going on,  
and how God has been leading us.

So, what is God doing in your life?  
Maybe you have no idea, and you are confused  
... maybe even hurting.

Will you still trust Him?  
Will you allow Him to put you in the RIGHT PLACE  
at the RIGHT TIME  
for the RIGHT PURPOSE?

## Message Guide & Questions

### Living in the Will of God Part 3 – God’s Purposes in a Fallen World Job 42

1. Read and consider Job 42:2
  2. So, just who is in control of this world?  
Read and consider 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Luke 4:5 – 7  
In the Gospel of John even Jesus describes Satan as being ‘the prince of this world’  
See John 12:31; John 14:30 and John 16:11
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3. God is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. God is :
  - i O \_\_\_\_\_ - all powerful. - Never beaten.
  - ii O \_\_\_\_\_ - knows everything. - Never taken by surprise.
  - iii O \_\_\_\_\_ - in all places at all times. - Never out of touch.
  - iv C \_\_\_\_\_ - all that exists does so by His choice.
  - v E \_\_\_\_\_ - is without beginning nor end.
  - vi J \_\_\_\_\_ - everything is accountable to Him.
4. As we address this issue we need to look a 3 things related to what is going on in the world.
  - a. N \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ at work.
  - b. S \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ at work.
  - c. D \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ at work.

5. Read and consider Matthew 5:45

6. Read and consider Genesis 1:26  
What are the 2 functions for mankind that this verse speaks of?
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7. Read and consider Job 40:6 then Job 42:2

8. Read again Job 42:2 – 6 and then read Hebrew 11: 35 - 39

## **Final Thoughts**

We must never forget that God is still sovereign  
even though we are in a world that is under the control of the evil one.

We would like to think that we are exempt from the calamities and disasters of this world,  
but they affect everyone equally.

We are called to be a physical expression of the moral character of God,  
and to rule over the earth;  
but every responsibility carries with it the inherent possibility of being irresponsible –  
otherwise it is not true responsibility.

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### **It is very important to note again**

that the world is not currently under the control of the evil one  
because he has defeated God  
– he never has, never can and never will  
– but because at ‘the fall’ he defeated humanity  
to whom God had given dominion over this world.

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**The Processes of a fallen world are often bad;  
but the Purposes of a sovereign God in the process are always good.**

This study may have raised more questions than it has answered  
– but that’s OK.

We will continue this theme next time.

## Message Guide & Questions

### Living in the Will of God Part 4 – Re-Working the Clay Jeremiah 18:1 - 6

1. Read Jeremiah 18:1 - 6
2. What does Jeremiah 18 tell us, and what is it a picture of?  

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3. Read and consider particularly Jeremiah 18:4 and verse 9 & 10.  
What are these verses saying to us?  

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4. The Lord, as a Potter, does not discard us and throw us away if he finds imperfections in us. What does He do?
  - a. He C \_\_\_\_\_ the P \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. He R \_\_\_\_\_ the C \_\_\_\_\_
5. Many of us are “marred pots”, but nothing is irredeemable with God.  
List some things that we tend to think ARE irredeemable.
  - i. A \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. D \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. C \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. D \_\_\_\_\_ as a C \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. M \_\_\_\_\_ as a C \_\_\_\_\_
6. Clay can be damaged in many ways, sometimes because of our own rebellion and sin but also sometimes by actions that we are not responsible for.

Does God write us off? Do we have to descend into second class living? Can we never hope to reach our intended full potential?  
What do we have to do so that we can be remolded into something that ‘seems best to Him’?

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7. Unfortunately some clay becomes very hardened; it is not soft and pliable, it is not submissive. What happens with that clay? Read Jeremiah 19:10, 14 & 15

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8. So what are the two messages here about 'living in the will of God'?

If things go wrong .....

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### **Final Thoughts**

Although it is absolutely true that nothing is irredeemable,  
does that mean that everything is fixable and restorable?

No, sometimes we will have to live with the consequences of our actions,  
but as reshaped pots we will have the grace and strength of the Lord with us to help us.  
Remember, after Jacob wrestled with God he had to endure walking with a limp.

What kind of vase are you?  
What kind of clay pot are you?  
Will you trust your life to Him?

Remember these words from that old hymn –

Have thine own way Lord. Have thine own way.  
Thou art the potter, I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after Thy will,  
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

## Message Guide & Questions

### Living in the Will of God Part 5 – Visions From Heaven Acts 26:19 - 29

1. Please read Acts 26:19 - 29
2. What is a 'Vision from Heaven' such as is mentioned in verse 19?  

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3. Read and consider Proverbs 3:6  
According to this verse, who has responsibilities and what are they?  

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4. Let's consider the question; what is Vision?  

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5. How do we know what is from God as opposed to what is from our own imagination? Read and consider Psalm 37:4  
  
What is the WRONG way to read this verse?  
What is the RIGHT way to read it?  

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6. So, how do you recognize a *Vision from Heaven*?  
Everyone's experience will be different, but here are some suggested features.
  - a. It will E \_\_\_\_\_ you.
  - b. It will be E \_\_\_\_\_ to you.
  - c. It will be E \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Read and consider Colossians 1:29
8. Read and consider Matthew 16:25 and 1 Timothy 6:9 - 11
9. Read and consider Matthew 6:19 – 20.

10. Finally we ask the question; what do you do with a Vision?  
Read Nehemiah 2:12 & Acts 26:19

### **Final Thoughts**

It is good that there is no simple formula to the manner in which God guides us,  
otherwise we would just superimpose that formula onto every situation  
– and we would not have to deal with God.

Everything in the Christian life  
grows out of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ.  
Neglect that relationship, and it all falls down.

It is not our responsibility to 'get guided'.  
The KEY is not in our becoming skilled in discerning guidance.  
The KEY is in our walking humbly with God.

But finally; what happens when a vision seems to die?  
when it seems God has forsaken you?  
when what God promised seems to not come to fruition?  
when you find yourself weeping tears of disappointment?

**DON'T DOUBT THE VISION!**  
Don't doubt in the dark what God showed you in the light!

Remember – God's delays are not God's denials.

## Message Guide & Questions

### The Will Of God For My Life Part 6 – The Will of God and the Word of God Psalm 119:97 - 105

1. As we seek to determine the will of God, 'vision' can play a very important role, but it can be a very dangerous area because although 'vision' may come from God, it is largely through subjective means. By '*subjective*' we mean '*from inside ourselves*'

Read and consider Psalm 37:4 and Jeremiah 17:9

2. Now read and consider Psalm 119:105
3. In the Bible there are 171 references to the 'Word of God' using many different words, some of which are :  
L \_\_, P \_\_\_\_\_, O \_\_\_\_\_, C \_\_\_\_\_,  
P \_\_\_\_\_, S \_\_\_\_\_, T \_\_\_\_\_, or simply Y \_\_\_ W \_\_\_
4. Because David was a man who kept the word of God, what did God call Him?

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5. How did David enquire of the Lord? Just in Psalm 119 alone take a look at the following verses 24, 30, 32, 36, 44, 59 & 60

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6. Read and consider 1 Chronicles 22:7 – 10. What does this tell you?

7. Read and consider Psalm 119:133

8. It stands to reason that when we read scripture we must read it properly. There are bad ways, as well as good ways, to read the Bible. We will look at the 3 most common ways that the Bible is read.

- a. R \_\_\_\_\_
- b. R \_\_\_\_\_
- c. R \_\_\_\_\_

9. **How to read the Bible accurately.**

Normal communication is broken up into 7 units of thought.

- i S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- ii P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- iii S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- iv The B \_ \_ \_
- v The T \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- vi The W \_ \_ \_ B \_ \_ \_
- vii C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

### Final Thoughts

It is extremely important to remember that  
the ***subjective guiding of God in the heart*** must come under  
the ***objective guiding of God in His Word.***

It must come from outside of ourselves in the external revelation of His Word.

Probably 90% or more of the will of God for our lives will be found in the Bible.  
If we live by scripture, much of the will of God is straightforward.

Our lives are vulnerable when Bible reading is edged out;  
when we feel so busy, so pressured, so tired  
that we have no time for scripture.  
If we do not know the word of God  
we will have great difficulty living confidently within His will.

If we look at scripture merely as an applicational tool for our lives,  
as a mere instruction manual,  
we miss the central aspect of it being about **spiritual life.**

Guidance is not about solving the riddle of your life plan.  
God calls us to Himself, and in union with Him He guides us.  
Then you will know WHERE you are going;  
and most importantly WHO you are going with,  
for God Himself will light up the path and direct your footsteps.

## Message Guide & Questions

### Living in the Will of God Part 7 – Reading Our Circumstances Acts 20:22 – 25; 21:7 - 15

1. In our study on how we can determine ‘the will of God for my life’ we have looked at issues for personal guidance and asked the question “What is my Vision from God?”, (read Acts 26:19 – 20) and “What do the Scriptures Say”; (read Psalm 119:105 & 133).

We move on to the question, “What do my Circumstances Say?”  
Read and consider Acts 20:22 – 25 and Acts 21:7 - 15

2. Read and consider Proverbs 3:5
3. There are some very obvious ways to read circumstances.  
For example, if you desire to be an Olympic sprinter but you are 55 years old, it would very soon become apparent that you would never reach the standard required to qualify.

4. We are to live In O \_\_\_\_\_ to God, and D \_\_\_\_\_ on God

There are three responses - Be W \_\_\_\_\_

Be W \_\_\_\_\_

Be W \_\_\_\_\_

5. Read and consider Isaiah 5:18 & 19a
6. Read and consider Romans 15:23 - 25
7. Paul’s incarceration would have felt like a disaster to the church at that time, and his friends probably continued to criticize him for his stubbornness. But what ultimately happened? Read and consider Philippians 1:12 - 14

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8. Read again and consider Acts 20:22 - 24

## **Final Thoughts**

Our first question should never be, 'Is it possible?'

Our first question should always be, 'Is it right?'

A thing doesn't have to be possible; it only has to be right.

Possible things are not always the right things,  
and right things do not always seem possible.

If we only live in the realm of that which is possible,  
then we are no different from anyone else.

Are you looking to God for direction?

What is the Vision of your heart?

What does the Scripture say?

What do your Circumstances say?

Are there any barriers that only God can break down?

It is not necessarily a bad thing when there are such barriers  
because through them it will test and prove to you  
that God is God, as He brings you through.

## Message Guide & Questions

### Living in the Will of God Part 8 – Seeking Good Advice Proverbs 2:1 - 9

1. In our journey so far can you remember the 3 questions that we have looked at?
  - a. What is my V \_\_\_\_\_ from God?
  - b. What do the S \_\_\_\_\_ say?
  - c. What do my C \_\_\_\_\_ say?
2. The fourth question is: What do other people say?  
Now read and consider Proverbs 2:1 – 9
3. What we need is –
  - a. Other people's S \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Other people's P \_\_\_\_\_ W \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Other people's P \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_
4. Read and consider Acts 13:2
5. Read and consider Psalm 1:1 - 2
6. Read again Proverbs 2:1 - 9
7. Look at the following verses – Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 19:20; Proverbs 20:18 and Proverbs 15:22
8. Read and consider Hebrews 13:7

## **Final Thoughts**

Advice can be a great help or an absolute disaster,  
Find Godly people who can talk from a Godly Perspective.

Other people often know us better than we know ourselves.  
They see gifts and abilities in us that we sometimes don't see.

We all know that we can learn from our mistakes;  
but it is better to learn from the mistakes of other people.

1. We need other people's Spiritual Insight.  
Find someone who knows God and knows Scripture.

2. We need other people's Practical Wisdom.  
Talk to someone who knows more about life than you do.

3. We need other people's Personal Experience.  
Find someone who has traveled this same road,  
and draw upon their experience.

## Message Guide & Questions

### Living in the Will of God Part 9 – Putting the Pieces in Place Isaiah 30:19 - 21

1. Read and consider Isaiah 30:19 - 21
2. Some of the things we need to have evidenced in our lives are –
  - a. A H \_\_\_\_\_ walk with God.
  - b. A C \_\_\_\_\_ day to day I \_\_\_\_\_ with God.
  - c. D \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ to the known will of God.
  - d. D \_\_\_\_\_ upon the indwelling Spirit of God.
3. Can you recall the four questions we have looked at so far?
  - 3.1 What is my V \_\_\_\_\_? [from God].
  - 3.2 What do the S \_\_\_\_\_ say?
  - 3.3 What do my C \_\_\_\_\_ say?
  - 3.4 What do O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_ say?

#### 4. **Where is the Compass Pointing?**

Consider the difference between a Compass and a Map.

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5. Some practical advice when seeking to make a decision concerning God's leading.
6. Can I ever be sure that I am making the correct decision?

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7. What happens if I make a mistake and make a wrong decision?  
Read and consider Isaiah 30:21

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## **Final Thoughts**

Remember – you cannot be guided if you are not moving.  
If you sit back and wait for God to do something you will never get anywhere.  
So remember the steps –

What is your Vision?  
What do the Scriptures say?  
What do my Circumstances say?  
What do Other People say?  
Where is the Compass pointing?

## **Leader's Message Guide & Answers**

This Leader's Guide is prepared to help the Study Group Leader to keep the discussions moving along. Maybe your people will come up with different answers, or perhaps they will need a little prompting from you.

Remember, you want to encourage your people to fully participate. This is not a 'teaching session' by the Group Leader, but rather a discussion group. This may at first seem like a contradiction, but you will need for the Lord to give you wisdom to keep the discussions 'on track' while also allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your path.

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 1 – Seeing the Big Picture Psalm 139:1 - 17

1.
  - a. Does God have a plan for my life?
  - b. How do I know it?
2.
  - a. Fairly Random
  - b. Unfair
  - c. Luck of the Draw
3. ASTROLOGY.
4. Some of the things for which there is a longing deep inside us are -
  - a. To be **KNOWN**
  - b. To be **GUIDED**
  - c. That our lives have a **GREATER SIGNIFICANCE**
  - d. To know that our lives are more than like a **RANDOM GAME of POKER**

Read again and consider Psalm 139:15

5. The BIG QUESTION is: ***How do I know the will of God for my life?***
6. The first question should be: ***What is the will of God?*** Period!

We need to fully understand that this is not about us and what we want. It is all about God and His plans – the BIG PICTURE

7.
  - a. **We are Objects of His Love.**

Read and consider Psalm 139:8 &16 and Romans 5:5

Our whole relationship with God is born in love, and lived as a mutual love relationship.

- b. **We are Subjects of His Lordship**

The nation of Canada is a Constitutional Monarch, so technically it does not have citizens, it has subjects.

As Christians we are also in 'the Kingdom of God'  
Read and consider the implications of Matthew 7:21

8. The Lordship of Christ is basic to the Gospel because:
  - a. It brings our lives under *new management*.
  - b. It involves the *surrender of our lives* to Him.
  - c. It is *not an optional extra*, it is fundamental.

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 2 – His Ways Are Not Our Ways Isaiah 55:6 - 9

1. The first question we should be asking is: *What is the Will of God?* Period. The starting point is not me and my need; the starting point is God.
2. Verse 8 is presented as a **Contrast** not a **Comparison**. Our ways and our thoughts are altogether different than God's – they are on a different level and with a different understanding.
3.
  - a. God will direct your paths – *as you acknowledge Him*.
  - b. But DO NOT lean on your own understanding. Our understanding is fallible. God will operate without explanation.
4. The contrast is that His ways and thoughts are HIGHER than ours.
5. The imagery used here describes an **immeasurable difference**.
6. God's ways and thoughts are immeasurably higher and different than our ways and thoughts because His WISDOM is so much greater.
7. At the heart of living in the will of God is TRUST – we trust in Him, His wisdom. The question is: do we really trust Him?
8. We would much prefer to walk by sight, rather than by faith, but that is not how God has decreed it.
9. We must **not become passive** in seeking the will of God. We must actively study His Word and not neglect it.
10. The Will of God must involve 3 things:
  - i. **Trusting** the **WAYS** of God, which are **Higher** than ours.
  - ii **Seeking** the **WISDOM** of God, which is **Greater** than ours.
  - iii **Relying** on the **WORD** of God, which is **True**
11. We must **avoid thinking that the will of God is so different than ours that we can never know it.**

Referring back to Proverbs 3:6, as we acknowledge Him we can trust Him to do what He has promised.

It is HIS responsibility to direct our paths and put us in the right place; but it is NOT His obligation to tell us what He is doing. Remember, *we walk by faith not by sight*.

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 3 – God's Purposes in a Fallen World Job 42

1. How do you reconcile this verse with the fact that all around us the world seems to be filled with terror, sadness, sickness, abuse, death, war, injustice, and incompetence? And what about I John 5:19. Read and consider
2. It is very clear that Satan has been permitted by God to have power in this world **for a period of time**. Read Job 23:13 – 14 and Psalm 135:6

The scripture is very clear that God is *the ultimate authority over all things*.

3. God is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. God is :

i	OMNIPOTENT	- all powerful.	Never beaten.
ii	ONMISCIENT	- knows everything.	Never taken by surprise.
lii	OMNIPRESENT	- in all places at all times.	Never out of touch.
iv	CREATOR	- all that exists does so by His choice.	
v	ETERNAL	- is without beginning nor end.	
vi	JUDGE	- everything is accountable to Him.	

God is sovereign in a world that is under the control of the Evil One.

4. 3 things related to what is going on in the world are -
  - a. NATURAL factors at work.
  - b. SPIRITUAL factors at work.
  - c. DIVINE factors at work.

5. ***Natural Factors at work.***

We live in a fallen world, and the laws of nature affect both believers and unbelievers alike. We are not exempt from the natural laws, and natural disasters etc.

Bad things DO happen to good people; and good things DO happen to bad people. There are natural factors that make no distinction between people in normal circumstances.

6. ***Spiritual factors at work.***

- a. We are to be a physical, visible, expression of the moral character of God.
- b. We are to rule over the earth.

The world is under the control of the evil one at this time, not because he has defeated God – he never has, never can, and never will – but because at ‘the fall’ the evil one defeated humanity to whom God had given dominion over this world.

The evil one does not have control over this world by some intrinsic right – but unfortunately, we gave it to him.

7. The story of Job can be split into 4 sections.
  - a. Satan’s proposition - to attack Job.
  - b. God’s permission - go ahead.
  - c. Job’s problems - his world collapses.
  - d. God purpose - Job sees the purpose of God in the preceding process.
  
8. Despite what Job endured, despite the sufferings of those early Christians, *God was doing something.*

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 4 – Re-Working the Clay Jeremiah 18:1 - 6

1. In our previous study we talk about the difference between the **Process** and the **Purpose** when determining God's will.

We discovered that often the 'process' could be evil, corrupting, even Satanic [like Job being under direct attack of Satan] but through it all God works out His good purpose.

2. Jeremiah 18 tells us that *'He remolds the marred clay into something else'* which is a picture of the *'sovereignty of God in action'* and of God as a potter.

(It should be noted that the word 'sovereign' is not technically a Biblical word as it does not appear in the original text of scripture; but you will find it 303 times in the NIV translation as it is a good and apt word to describe what the scriptures are trying to convey.)

3. Jeremiah 18:4, verses 9 & 10 are saying that if the potter finds that the clay is marred, does he throw it away, does he discard it? NO! The same is true of us.
4. a. He Changes the Plan  
b. He Remolds the Clay

He takes the marred clay [us] and remolds it, forming it into another pot, shaping it as seems best to Him.

5. Some things that we tend to think ARE irredeemable.

- i Abortion
- ii Divorce
- iii Criminal Record
- iv Damaged as a Child
- v Molested as a Child

6. We need to become 'soft' and 'pliable' and yield to Him and allow Him to work in us and form us into another pot 'shaping us as seems best to Him'. If necessary, we need to confess our sins to Him 'who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins'.
7. This act of rebellion and rejection of God will bring about judgment; this clay cannot be remolded, so it has to be smashed.

8. If things go wrong .....
- a. Remain soft, pliable and responsive; then He will rework us into another pot, shaping it as seems best to Him.
- b. If you become hard, resistant and rigid; then He has to break the jar.

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 5 – Visions From Heaven Acts 26:19 - 29

1. In our previous 4 studies we have been looking at various aspects of discovering the will of God in our lives, or to put it another way 'living in the will of God'. Some of what we have looked at are the 'big picture' issues; how God works out His purpose in a world described as 'being in the control of the evil one; and so today we will explore the issue of **Personal Guidance**.
2. The fact that God does guide us is very clear in scripture. Read and consider the following –  
Psalm 37:23 [KJV]; Psalm 48:14; Psalm 73:24; Proverbs 3:6; Isaiah 58:11 and Colossians 1:9

There are a multiplicity of ways by which God guides people - which means there is no simple formula.

3. Who has responsibilities and what are they?

**Our responsibility** – is to '*acknowledge Him in all our ways*'

We do this in our love for Him, our obedience to Him, and our dependence on Him.

If we will do this, and only if we do this, then .....

**His responsibility** – is to guide us.

Listen to this carefully.

The KEY is not in our becoming skilled in discerning guidance.

The KEY is in our walking humbly with God.

4. Vision or 'a vision' is not something that you just make up; it has to be received. Read and consider Jeremiah 23:16
5. This may have seemed like a strange verse to use in this situation but there are two ways to read it,

The WRONG way to read Psalm 37:4 is –

Delight yourself in God, and He will give you whatever you want.

However, the RIGHT way to read Psalm 37:4 is –

Delight yourself in God, and then the desires of your heart will be **God-given**.

**What you actually want will be desires given to you from God**

Is it God's will or is it your will? Those two will be the same thing.  
It is your will because it is God's will, and He works in you to will according to His good purpose. Read Philippians 2:12 - 13

6.
  - a. It will Energize you.
  - b. It will be External to you.
  - c. It will be Eternal.
  
7. It will **Energize** you, and you will be filled with His energy that will powerfully work in you. Find out what energizes you and focus on those things.  
Eliminate the things that drain you.
  
8. It will be **External** to you. It will be 'outward-focused'  
It will not be self-serving – but it will serve others.
  
9. It will have **Eternal** value.  
It will inevitably include materials things, but they are a means to an end.  
It will be about *laying up treasures in Heaven*.  
Of course we need money - there is no virtue in either poverty or wealth – but wealth must be our servant, not our master.
  
10. When you have a sense of the direction that God is leading you in, tuck it away in your heart and see what happens. You don't have to immediately tell anyone; wait for God to unfold it in His own time.

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### The Will Of God For My Life Part 6 – The Will of God and the Word of God Psalm 119:97 - 105

1. Psalm 37: 4 does not mean that God will give us whatever we want, but rather that our desires will be God-given.

The problem for us is that 'the desires of our heart', however well conceived, can be deceptive.

Therefore the *subjective guiding of God in the heart* must come under the *objective guiding of God in His Word*. It must come from outside of ourselves in the external revelation of His Word.

2. Today we will discuss The Will of God and the Word of God.
3. Law, Precepts, Ordinances, Commandments, Promises, Statutes, Testimonies, or simply Your Word.

All of these refer to the **Written Word of God**.

4. Because David was a man who kept the word of God, God called Him –  
“*a man after my own heart*”.

The Psalmist understood that the 'subjective' desires of the heart must always be under the authority of the 'objective' word of God.

The Word of God and the Heart of God are interrelated.

5. If you are going to know the Will of God it is absolutely imperative that you know the Word of God.
6. From 1 Chronicles 22:7 – 10 we learn the very important lesson that many times the Word of God has to override our hearts.

David had something in his heart, but the word of God contradicted his heart, and when it did **the Word held Authority** ... as it always must.

7. Our lives are vulnerable when Bible reading is edged out; when we feel so busy, so pressured, so tired that we have no time for scripture.  
If we do not know the word of God we will have great difficulty living confidently within His will.
8. The 3 most common ways that the Bibles is read.

a. **Remedially.**

This is where the Bible is read purely to find remedies for life; Bible Study and teaching are simply for therapeutic reasons. The Bible is seen as a self-help book for living our lives well. Psychology replaces Theology.

What is wrong with this?

The focus changes from being about God to being about ourselves.

The Bible is not about self-help.

*It is about God being our refuge and help.*

The Bible is not an 'owner's manual' to help us.

*It is about Christ being Lord.*

The Bible is not a repair manual.

*It is about Jesus Christ, Saviour and Sanctifier who repairs us.*

The subject of scripture is GOD, in CHRIST by the HOLY SPIRIT

b. **Randomly**

This is the 'Russian Roulette' approach whereby people open their Bibles randomly and expect a text to jump out at them. It is true that on rare occasions God can bring a verse to us seemingly randomly, but that it not a result of a search conducted randomly.

c. **Rightly**

It is best when a word comes to us during our normal daily reading of the Bible. But, if that is not our habit then it is difficult for the Lord to communicate with us.

9. **How to read the Bible accurately.**

Normal communication is broken up into 7 units of thought.

i **Sentence.**

NEVER read less than the whole sentence.

If you were an atheist you could 'cherry pick' 15 texts from the Bible that says "There is no God" but that is by quoting only half the verse. For example, you could pull out from 2 Kings 5:15 the words "Now I know there is no God .... ", but the complete sentence goes on to say "in all the world except in Israel."

Be very careful to always read the entire sentence.

ii **Paragraph.**

The verse numbering in the scriptures can help us to navigate our way around, but they are not helpful for interpreting.

For example: read Philippians 4 v.13. What does this tell us; that we can do anything at all; leap over the moon maybe?

Now read the entire paragraph of Philippians 4 v.12 and 13.

What Paul is actually saying is that he can live and be content in any circumstance because Christ is his strength.

iii **Subject**

What are the topic and / or theme that are actually being presented?

For example, most people would call 1 Corinthians 13 'The Love Chapter', but if we look closely at the previous [chapter 12] and the following chapter [14] we see that 1 Corinthians 13 is actually about exercising spiritual gifts; about how the church should function

iv **The Book**

We have to ask; what book is this scripture coming from? Why was it written?

A common mistake, for example, is to take the verse in Proverbs that says

"train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it", and think that is a promise. This may be a 'general truth', but Proverbs is not a book of promises; indeed the same book says, "a man can have a fool for a son".

v. **The Testament**

*The Old Testament* is a Jewish book. The focus is God and the Jewish people. It tells of God's dealings with them.

*The New Testament* is a Christian book. It is directed at the new body which comprises both Jew and Gentile. It presents the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham with the whole world [not just the Jewish people] being brought into covenant with God.

vi **The Whole Book**

Taken as a whole from start to finish, the Bible is a 'progressive revelation'.

That is not 'half truth' to 'whole truth', but rather, from **promise to fulfillment.**

vii **Christ Himself.**

It says that in the New Testament **the Word became flesh.**

Read and consider 2 Corinthians 1 v.20; John 5 v.39 and Luke 24 v.27.

Jesus is the ultimate context for understanding

**Go to Final Thoughts.**

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 7 – Reading Our Circumstances Acts 20:22 – 25; 21:7 - 15

1. In this extraordinary story Paul is determined to go to Jerusalem certain that he is 'compelled by the Spirit' to go there. Yet later the disciples 'through the Spirit' urge Paul not to go there. There is a very clear conflict here, and Paul decides to ignore the warning. As this story unfolds .....

  - a. Paul has a driving vision 'compelled by the Spirit' to go to Jerusalem.
  - b. This is consistent with the Word of God - taking the gospel into the world.
  - c. Then Paul's friends unanimously urge him in the strongest terms possible not to go, and they predict what would happen if he did.
  - d. Paul decides to ignore their warnings, and he keeps going.
  - e. Everything that his friends said would happen to Paul did. He was arrested and spent about 5 years in prison.

Paul's friends no doubt thought him to be foolish and would have been justified in saying, "We told you so." So what is going on here?

2. We are talking about '**Reading our Circumstances Wisely**'  
For this we need to trust in the Lord and lean not on our own understanding.

Consider this:

If Noah had leaned on his own understanding -  
- he never would have built the Ark.

If Abraham had leaned on his own understanding -  
- he never would have left Ur.

If Moses had leaned on his own understanding -  
- he never would have led Israel out of Egypt.

If David had leaned on his own understanding -  
- he never would have gone to face Goliath.

If Paul had leaned on his own understanding –  
- he never would have gone to Jerusalem.

3. But what do you do when –
  - a. You have a Vision that is compelling.
  - b. You believe it is from God.
  - c. It is **utterly consistent with Scripture.**



## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 8 – Seeking Good Advice Proverbs 2:1 - 9

1.
  - a. What is my **Vision** from God?
  - b. What do the **Scriptures** say?
  - c. What do my **Circumstances** say?
2. We need to exercise caution, BUT we are not islands cut adrift from everyone else; we live in community. We need input from others whom we know to be trustworthy and wise.
3. What we need is –
  - a. Other people's **Spiritual Insight**.
  - b. Other people's **Practical Wisdom**.
  - c. Other people's **Personal Experience**

#### 4. **Other People's Spiritual Insight**

In the church, spiritual gifts are not distributed in order to create 'lone rangers'. They are distributed in such a way as to make us *inter-dependent* on one another, not *independent* of each other.

Independence is a weakness.

Inter-dependence is a strength.

5. We need to be seeking the mind of God – not the counsel of the Godless. Seek out mature, wise and godly people whom you sense possess spiritual insight. Such people may not be your family or among your friends.

#### 6. **We need other people's Practical Wisdom**

Proverbs is a great book on 'decision making'. It is a book of 'wisdom'. [not promises, remember?]

Other people often know us better than we know ourselves.

They see gifts and abilities in us that we sometimes don't see.

7. Proverbs talk a lot about the benefit of seeking input from others outside of the family. The best way to know your gift is by seeing if other people recognize it.

#### 8. **We need the Personal Experience of Other People**

Why did Moses give Joshua some key responsibilities? To share experience.  
Why did Elijah take Elisha around with him? To share experience.  
Why did Jesus call 12 to be with Him? To give experience.  
Why did Paul take Timothy with him? To share experience.

**Age and Experience** can give **Wisdom and Insight**.

## Leader's Message Guide & Answers

### Living in the Will of God Part 9 – Putting the Pieces in Place Isaiah 30:19 - 21

1. This last study in this 9 part series is as the title says: Putting the Pieces in Place.

Experiencing the will of God is where our relationship with God is **active**, rather than a **detached passive belief** up in the sky. It is involved daily at the very core of our life.

2. Some of the things we need to have evidenced in our lives are –
  - a. A **Humble** walk with God.
  - b. A **Consistent** day to day **Intimacy** with God.
  - c. A **Deliberate Obedience** to the known will of God.
  - d. A **Dependence** upon the indwelling Spirit of God.

Without these things there will be no growth or progress in the will of God.

3. The four questions we have looked at so far are -
  - a. What is my **Vision** [from God]. Acts 26:19  
Not giving us everything we want, but what we want is God-given.
  - b. What do the **Scriptures** say? Psalm 119:133  
God speaks to us through our regular reading of Scripture.  
It is never in conflict.
  - c. What do my **Circumstances** say? Proverbs 3:5 – 6  
Often, circumstances seem to go against the right thing.
  - d. What do **Other People** say? Proverbs 12:15  
Look to wise people who know you well.

4. There is a big difference between a Compass and a Map.

A map says, 'You are here ....now go there'.

A compass gives you the general direction – and you move in that direction.

You may still have to negotiate obstacles and diversions ..... maybe even a U turn, but a compass keeps you moving in the right direction.

5. On a sheet of paper create a list of 'For' on one side, and "Against' on the other. As you continue to think, pray and talk about it you will find that one side of your list will start to grow.
6. Mostly we can never be 100% sure; that is where the element of 'stepping out in faith' comes into the equation.

We will see God most clearly 'in the rear view mirror' as confirmation comes in retrospect. That's why we *walk by faith and not by sight*.

7. Isn't it wonderful to know that if you are listening to God He will call you back onto the right track. It will not be all plain sailing – read again Isaiah 30:19 & 20 – but never forget.

**God is many times more interested than you are  
that you take the right steps and don't make a mistake.**

**Read Proverbs 16:9**